

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION BY
SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS**

SEPTEMBER 4, 2012

Enhancing Services for Transition Age Youth and Preventing Crossover into Probation

In Los Angeles County (County), some youth in the child welfare system are in danger of "crossing over" to the delinquency system. Approximately 100 youth, currently under the supervision of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), are arrested each month. According to the 2011 Conrad N. Hilton Report "these Crossover youth experience the most negative personal outcomes and the highest level of public service costs." The Report further states that "...82% of Crossover youth receive public welfare benefits (General Relief, CalWorks, Food Stamps or Medi-Cal) during their first four years of adulthood." In the initial four years following exit from their respective County systems, the average per-person public service utilization costs across all domains for the crossover group was more than double that of youth in the Juvenile Probation and Child Welfare systems.

In an effort to prevent "Crossovers," DCFS, in partnership with Casey Family Programs and the Children's Research Center, developed the Delinquency Prevention Pilot Project (DPPP), which includes an assessment tool for use by a DPPP Multi-disciplinary Team to identify youth in foster care who are at a high-risk of crossing over to the delinquency system. As part of the pilot project, the assessment tool is currently being tested in four offices (Compton, Glendora, Palmdale and South County). Thus far, a

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report by DCFS identifying delinquency prevention youth by risk level shows that, between 20.6% and 36.3 % of the youth assessed each month in the four offices were assessed at high risk of crossing over. To date, an average of 10 youths at-risk of crossover have been identified each month in Compton; 4 in Glendora; 9 in Palmdale; and 14 in South County.

The County's juvenile court has also adopted a Multi-disciplinary Team approach which it would like to implement countywide. Under California Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section 241.1, whenever a minor becomes involved in both the child welfare and probation systems, both departments must prepare a joint assessment of the youth and make a recommendation to the court on whether the youth will be supervised by the dependency or delinquency court. This system has historically fallen short in reducing youths' likelihood of reoffending and implementing case plans that link youth to needed supports. Recognizing some of the weaknesses of WIC 241.1, the California Legislature enacted AB 129, which allows counties to pilot dual status systems in which crossover youth can have simultaneous dependency and delinquency status. In May 2007, the County implemented an AB 129 pilot court at one of the County's ten Delinquency Court locations. The pilot court utilizes a Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) model in which a probation officer, social worker, clinician, and education advocate create and implement a case plan to ensure youths' accountability for their delinquency charges, appropriate school and home placement, and access to needed services.

It is in the County's interest to protect the welfare of these vulnerable youth through prevention and early intervention and to help them become thriving and self-reliant adults. Studies show these multi-disciplinary approaches reduce recidivism, improve outcomes for at-risk youth and can reduce County costs.

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I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Direct the Chief Executive Officer, in conjunction with juvenile court leadership, the Directors of the Departments of Mental Health, Health Services, Public Health, Public Defender and the Department of Children and Family Services, and the Chief Probation Officer to report back to the Board in 14 days on:

1. Strategies to better serve crossover youth, including strengthening the Department of Children and Family Services Delinquency Prevention Pilot Project and countywide expansion of the 241.1 Crossover Youth Project. This report should include but not be limited to the exploration of additional staffing, based on site-specific demands and caseloads, whether in-house or contracted, improved coordination and oversight, and all corresponding possible funding sources, including the feasibility of using Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds through a mid-year adjustment to the plan; and
2. The specific means by which the efficacy and outcomes of the Delinquency Prevention Pilot and 241.1 Crossover Youth Projects will be evaluated upon 12 months of implementation, in conjunction with the participating Departments, to determine how success will be measured pursuant to the findings of the 2011 Conrad N. Hilton Report.

I FURTHER MOVE, that the Director of the Department of Mental Health concurrently work with County Counsel and the Chief Executive Officer to develop a process that comports with state law for expedited consideration of MHSA funding that will support these programs.

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